

# James Ward Rogers Uncrowned King

The Tragic End of the Famous American Ivory Poacher

by W. Robert Foran

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EVERY one will remember the dramatic story, recently given to the world through the daily press, of the death of James Ward Rogers, the American elephant-poacher, in the Congo. The name Rogers probably conveyed nothing to many millions all over the world until the story of his tragic end was published broadcast. Yet so many who have traveled in Stanley's "Darkest Africa"—the territory which witnessed the truly remarkable end of an adventurous career—the details of the dramatic chase through the jungles and its still more dramatic conclusion will not be a mere pipe-dream.

There must be many others in America besides myself who have been through this section of Central Africa and to whom Rogers was known personally. And to us the story brings regrets for Rogers was a fine type of man, even though his latter days were spent in outlawry and defiance of lawfully constituted authority.

In order that the causes which led up to the tragedy may be better understood, it is necessary to touch lightly upon history and political facts. Many may recall that the British government leased the strip of the Congo territory known as the Lado Enclave—a long strip stretching along the banks of the Nile from the southernmost extremity of Lake Albert to Kiro, on the edge of Sudan—to the late King Leopold of the Belgians, for the duration of his lifetime. On his death, it passed back into British hands and, incidentally, under the control of the Sudan officials.

Prior to this—that is to say, under Leopold's rule—the Lado Enclave was the happy hunting-ground of a band of British and foreign ivory-poachers. The Belgian administration of the Lado was a mere farce. Officials were few and far between and the natives did as they willed, without fear of let or hindrance. It must be remembered, however, that if any of the poachers were caught red-handed with the poached ivory, they were sent to the Belgian Congo capital, Leopoldville, on the Congo river, to undergo ten years' hard labor in a chain-gang.

This little-punishment of punishment was the worse imaginable. They were chained round the neck and fastened to a long string of the worst native malefactors. Their legs were riveted into chains and round their middles were other heavy chains, supporting the enormous leg-irons. All day these poor wretches worked in the forests or in the open, under a blazing sun, goaded on to further labor by the extreme brutalities of their hard-hearted guards.

White man and negro were treated alike. No favors were shown to any of them.

It may be safely stated that the death of Rogers closes the long chapter of lawless elephant poaching in the Congo. For years the Lado Enclave was known as "No Man's Land," but it is not so now, for the Sudan government assumed control in June, 1910, and set about exterminating the poaching industry.

On my arrival at Mongalla, the southernmost post of the Sudan on the Nile in those days, I had the good fortune to meet my old comrade in arms, Capt. C. V. Fox of the Egyptian army, and discussed at length with him the prospects of routing out the ivory-poachers.

At the time I little thought that, a trifle over two years later, Captain Fox would be the central figure with Rogers in one of the most dramatic and exciting stories of real adventure which has ever come out of the Congo, or, for that matter, Africa. But we who know our Africa have learned to be surprised at nothing.

Part of this remarkable story comes to me direct from my old friend Captain Fox and part from other friends in Africa. Captain Fox's story lacks a good many details, for the modesty of the British soldier is reflected throughout his narrative. There are many points you and I would like to have cleared up, but either Fox's modesty or his sense of what is due to a dying man's last request prevent the elucidation of the blank spaces.

For instance, we would like to know who is the doctor referred to by Rogers and Captain Fox. Maybe we shall never know! Rogers' lips are sealed by death and the lips of Captain Fox are sealed by a dying man's last charge. The "doctor" must go down to posterity as a figure of mystery, unless the Belgians disclose his name. We know that he was the boon companion of Rogers and we have the latter's statement that he was innocent of poaching.

One must sympathize with Rogers, even if one disapproves of his breaches of the law. His is a picturesque figure and he died as, no doubt, he would have wished to have died—with his face to the front and shielding his comrade, the mysterious doctor.

Rogers was an American who, at different times, was a resident of many cities in California. He had spent many years of his life in an unquenchable search after adventure—with a big A—until he found his heart's desire in Central Africa. He joined in the rush to the Klondike in the late nineties and after his return he entirely disappeared until the news came of his death in Africa.

After trying first one thing and then another in Africa, he turned his hand to elephant poaching, and here he found his true element of adventure.

He got the natives of the Lado Enclave under his control so that they did his every bidding and acted as his allies. He established an organized administration over the wild, trackless country, and, among these naked savages, who had hitherto known no master, was virtually a king, even if he was an uncrowned monarch. Time after time he evaded capture by Sudan and Belgian officials. And, finally, we know that he eluded a hot pursuit for ever six weeks.

Entering the Lado Enclave with his white companion, he set to work to make the unruly and hitherto unsubdued natives subservient to his will—and even more than that, for he made them staunch allies. On the approach of government officials the natives would give him ample warning so that he could escape. Then he traveled about the country until he saw a good site for his headquarters, where he could store his ivory, ammunition and supplies.

The next thing to do was to train a band of natives to act as soldiers.

All now being ready, he proceeded to mark

down the good herds of elephants in his vicinity. His native spies were trained to bring him early information of the approach of a good herd. No sooner did he get news of some big tuskers than he set forth through the thorn scrub, under a blazing tropical sun, to track them.

Creeping on all-fours through the bushes and fifteen-foot-high grass, he made his way into the center of the herd and selected his bulls. He would follow them up until he had killed off all the best tuskers in the herd. Then would come the cutting up of the elephants and the heaving out of their giant ivory teeth.

At last the Sudan government determined to stand this brazen lawlessness no longer. A messenger was dispatched to Rogers warning him to come in and surrender, or else, declared the officials, he would not be spared.

His answer was typical of the man: "If you want me, come and get me."

Now Captain Fox, inspector of the Mongalla province in the Sudan, did want Rogers and, moreover, wanted him badly. He accepted the challenge, after first sending word to Rogers that he proposed to bring him into Mongalla, "dead or alive."

Rogers laughed when he read the message. Back came the answer, on the foot of the same official note: "I am waiting. Come and get me." Captain Fox set forth from Mongalla in pursuit of this daring outlaw with the meager force of a Sudanese non-commissioned officer and six Sudanese soldiers and a few native carriers and mules for the conveyance of supplies.

Up the banks of the Nile went the little party of soldiers and their white leader and ever in advance of them was the fearless Rogers, laughing in his sleeve and content in the belief that he could outwit the most determined pursuit. But he had misjudged the caliber of the man who had been sent after him.

Day by day the little party kept on down the Nile, up the Nile, across the Nile, first in the Congo territory and then in Uganda territory. Doubling and redoubling on their tracks, they never gave up hope.

Something of the spirit which must have possessed both pursuer and pursued can be gleaned from the story of the final meeting between these two men.

Worn out, wet and hungry, Fox and his party reached a village late one night. Here they learned that the poachers had shot a native for disobeying an order given by Rogers. This had happened only that morning, so now they were hot on the trail of Rogers.

Despite their pitiable condition, on learning of this murder Captain Fox and his weary men at once set out in the dark in pursuit. They traveled all that night and the greater part of the next day. Toward sunset they came in sight of an immense village square, around which were posted a hundred of the armed native followers of the poacher.

Slowly Captain Fox advanced until he stood in the center of the armed men.

"Where is the white man, your master?" he asked authoritatively.

The armed natives watched him sullenly, without vouchsafing reply. At last, after what seemed like hours to the captain, one of the natives pointed silently toward a large house in the center of the village.

Fox approached the house indicated, with his rifle cocked and ready for instant use in case of need. He halted a few paces from the house and summoned Rogers to come out and surrender. No reply came to the first summons and so he repeated it twice more.

All remained as silent as the grave and Fox began to suspect treachery. But he kept his eyes on the door.

Suddenly it opened; and a native servant came out and saluted Fox.

"The commandant wants you to come in," he said, in his native dialect. "He is sick, and can not come out to you."

At first it looked suspicious, but Fox decided to risk any trap. He walked toward the house and left his rifle outside leaning against the wall. Then he called to his soldiers to remain on guard and allow no one to leave the house while he was in it.

Then he passed in through the doorway.

He found himself in a large dark room, lighted by a single flickering candle. For a moment his eyes failed to see anything, but gradually he became accustomed to the dark light and made out the figure of a white man lying on a camp cot. Beside him sat another white man, who was unknown to Fox. He had heard that there was another white man with Rogers, whom the natives called "Doctor," but his identity had never been learned by the government.

Surrounding the bed were ten armed native followers of Rogers, who eyed the soldier with sullen suspicion.

Fox stood inside the door and looked from one white man to the other.

"Which is Mr. Rogers?" he asked, breaking the strained silence.

"Mr. Rogers has been shot," replied the white man sitting beside the cot, with a growl of anger.

"Yes, and by your men."

The man on the bed spoke thickly and as if in great pain.

"I am sorry, very sorry, indeed, that you have been wounded, Mr. Rogers." Fox walked slowly forward to the bed. "I hope it is not serious, but certainly you are mistaken in thinking my soldiers did it."

"No!" Rogers thundered at him, partly rising in bed and falling back with a groan. The other white man tried to soothe him. "It was by the soldiers you sent here to arrest me," he continued, with bitter hate.

"There were three of my men on ahead of me, it is true," Fox replied, "but I am convinced they would not have shot at you or interfered with you."

The man on the bed eyed the soldier sternly, without answering. For a few moments there was silence.

"Come and stand right here so that I can have a look at you," Rogers ordered Fox suddenly. "Now, tell me what you want with me."

Captain Fox, being still unarmed, went and stood beside the bed. Under the red blankets covering Rogers could be seen the shape of a heavy revolver. It was pointing straight at Fox's breast. Rogers' eyes were blazing. Still the soldier did not flinch.

"Well, you're a cool one," Rogers admitted grudgingly. "Do you know I have you covered with my Colt?"

"Yes, but you won't dare to shoot," Fox laughed quietly.

"Won't dare! Why not, I should like to know?" Rogers answered back. "I have over a hundred armed men outside and you only have four men with you, so my men tell me."

"Nevertheless, you won't dare shoot me or molest my men. You are under arrest, Mr. Rogers, for illicit ivory-poaching, murder, entering a closed district without a permit, and carrying a gun without a license."

"So that is what I am charged with, is it?" Rogers smiled grimly. "Have you no other charges to prefer?"

"You're wounded now. Let all that rest until you are better."

"No, I'm a dying man, I guess. Do you know you're in the Belgian territory, that you are surrounded by my men, and that you stand more chance of arrest than I do?"

"You are mistaken. I am not in Belgian territory and we need not discuss the chances of my arrest."

Captain Fox deemed it wise not to excite the man any more and silently withdrew from the room. Once outside, he set to work to disarm the followers of the dying Rogers. This was soon accomplished, for they were cowed, now that their leader was helpless.

In the middle of the night a native servant came to Captain Fox to say that Rogers was dying, and that he wished to speak to the officer. The soldiers did not want him to go into the house again. But Captain Fox was not to be deterred.

As he entered the house, Rogers turned to his white companion, saying:

"Doctor, I wish you to hear and be a witness to what I am going to say to Captain Fox. I surrender myself voluntarily to the Sudan government. I want you to see that the doctor gets into no trouble over this affair, captain. I believe I am a dying man, so that I am not going to lie about it. This was my show and all my work. The doctor is blameless."

On the following afternoon the three soldiers who had been sent on ahead arrived at the village and gave Captain Fox an account of their experience.

They stated that on arriving in the poacher's stronghold Rogers ordered them to give up their arms. He seized his Mauser rifle and opened fire with it and a revolver. His companion, the doctor, also fired on the soldiers with a Winchester. Others attacked them with Winchesters and with arrows. Had it not been almost dark, the soldiers would have been killed and, as it was, they all had narrow escapes, all of them being hit.

In the fighting, Rogers was struck by a soldier's bullet, which lodged near the hip, but he walked to his house and sat down in a chair.

By this time Captain Fox was satisfied that he was on Belgian territory and wrote to the Belgian commandant to explain the occurrence. Two days later the Belgian officer arrived on the scene with a large escort of troops.

The day after the arrival of the Belgians, Rogers was obviously dying, and sent for Fox. He was conscious to the end, and described his symptoms.

"Say, captain, you are a big fellow and strong. Lift me up once more—for the last time," he muttered. "I shall not be here tomorrow. I'm still pretty heavy, ain't I?"

Fox leaned over him and gently raised him on the bed, with his arms under the dying man's shoulders.

"I'm sorry, Rogers," he said. "But you brought this on yourself."

"I know, old man. You're all right. I would rather have surrendered to you than any one. Good-bye, Doc. Good-bye, captain. Remember, the doctor is innocent, all my sh—"

His head dropped back as his spirit went to render its last account to its Maker. Gently Fox laid the body of the poacher on the bed and then turned away to escape the sorrow of the doctor, who was deeply unstrung by his friend's death.

And so this man died, far away from his friends and country. Full of courage and grit to the end, his fate was worthy of a better cause. So did the curtain fall upon the most dramatic tragedy in the history of the Congo elephant-poachers.

## HABAKKUK, THE NEGLECTED.

Short Chapter of the Bible That is Little Read.

One of the disappointed statesmen of the country on election night found solace in reading Habakkuk, eighth of the minor prophets, as found in the old testament. We doubt if many persons, even such as are fairly familiar with the Bible, frequently read this little work of three chapters, says the Philadelphia Inquirer. It is seldom one hears texts from this book preached upon.

As a fact, nothing is known whatever of Habakkuk unless he is identified with one of the same name who is mentioned in the apocryphal works as having ministered to Daniel in the Lion's den. The name is not Hebrew, but may have been assumed for literary purposes, as was not uncommon in those days.

The gist of the first two chapters of the book is the grief of the prophet over the approaching Chaldeans. The last chapter is a poem with musical directions, which some persons think was written by another of the same name or title. Perhaps not many persons know that in this book is found the familiar quotation: "But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him."

### Cause and Effect.

"You've got an awful grouch this morning."

"I know it."

"What's the matter—didn't you have a good breakfast?"

"Naw!"

"What was the trouble?"

"The boy didn't deliver the morning paper and there was nothing for me to do but to talk to my wife during the whole meal."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

### Most Painful Part.

"Here's an interesting article in a periodical about making surgery painless."

"Is there anything in that article about doing away with the surgeon's bill?"

## CELERY AS DUCK FOOD

Winter Buds and Root Stocks Are Relished Best.

Plant is Wholly Submerged With Long, Flexible, Ribbon-Like Leaves of Light Translucent Green—Flowers Are Peculiar.

(By W. L. M'ATEE.)

The names wild celery and canvas-back duck have been closely associated in the annals of American sport. To a certain extent this association is justified, since the canvas-back obtains about one-fourth of its food from this plant—a greater proportion than any other duck. However, the assertion that the flavor of the canvas-back is superior to that of any other duck and that it depends on a diet of wild celery is not proved, to say the least.

The scapula or bluebills and the red-head also are very fond of wild celery, and are fully as capable of getting the delicious buds as the canvas-back. Several other ducks get more or less of this food, the writer finding that even the scoters on a northern lake in fall lived almost exclusively on it for a time. All parts of the plant are eaten by ducks but the tender winter buds and root stocks are relished best. Wild celery buds can usu-



Wild Celery.

ally be obtained by the diving ducks, such as the bluebills, redheads, canvas-back and scoters. The non-diving species, as the mallard, black duck, baldpate and the geese get an occasional bud, but more often they feed upon the leaves.

Wild celery is a wholly submerged plant with long, flexible, ribbon-like leaves of light translucent green and of practically the same width (anywhere from one-fourth to three-fourths of an inch, from root to tip). This plant may be distinguished from the eelgrass, which lives in brackish water, by the fact that its leaves grow in bundles from the root stock, while those of eelgrass arise singly and alternate on opposite sides of the stem.

The flowers of wild celery are peculiar. The staminate flowers attached at the base of the plants shed pollen, which floats on the surface of the water and fertilizes the pistillate flower. The latter is attached to a long slender, round stem, which contracts into a spiral, drawing the flower under the water after fertilization. The seed pod into which the pollenized flower develops is straight or curved, a little slenderer than a common lead pencil and from 3 to 6 inches long. It contains embedded in a clear jelly, small dark seeds, in number about 50 to 100. No such pod is borne by any other fresh water plant.

## GUINEAS ARE HARD TO RAISE

Young Birds Must Be Watched Carefully Until Past Tender Age—Of Very Wild Nature.

Guinea hens are among the hardest of all birds to breed, chiefly because the young guinea is so extremely tender. They are also of a very wild nature, and when one of them is lost from the hen it may be counted as lost. It is advisable to keep the young guineas shut up for a few days after they are hatched and feed them on bread crumbs, coarse corn meal and occasionally a hard-boiled egg, ground fine and mixed with the bread crumbs.

After they leave the hen, if the days are warm and bright, they are allowed to hunt bugs and worms and require little feeding. After they are feathered out they need little care, as they are able to shift for themselves until the winter cuts off their supply of food.

In winter they must have a shelter and be fed the same as other poultry, but must be kept shut in when there is snow on the ground, as they will fly into the tops of trees or on roofs of buildings, and refuse to come down.

### Winter Feed for Poultry.

One of the best and most relished winter feeds for poultry is cabbage, says a writer in an exchange. Even though there is an abundance of other green vegetable matter, I should still strive to add some cabbage to the list.

It is true that there is nothing quite as good for the hens as a growing crop, such as rye, over which they can range and thus combine exercise with food getting, and every effort should be made to provide it, but often space is too limited for such crops, and dependence must be had altogether on substitutes that can be stored away.

## The ONCOOKER

S. E. KISER

### ADDUAL SPRIG SOG



"Tis down the thig to sig of sprig  
With all its gladness,  
With all its birds upon the wing,  
With baldie id airy dress,  
Therefore I twag up by lyre  
Ad try with all by bight  
To bravely strike poetic fire  
Ad voice by soul's delight.

As Browdie says the hill's dew-pearled,  
The dail is of the thord,  
Ad thigs are all right with the world—  
At least they are this boid;  
Toborrow it bay adow sobe bore  
Or blow bed's whiskers loose;  
But let us dot up a roar,  
For what would be the use?

By dose is clogged, by eyes are red,  
By throat is sore ad raw,  
By jolts all ache, so does by head,  
By breath is hard to draw,  
But sprig is here with all its cheer,  
So let us cease to fret,  
Ad sig ad shile ad clog a while  
To witer faddels yet.

### Disgusting Stupidity.

"Do you really and truly think I am beautiful?" she asked.

"You are simply divine," he replied. "But there are other girls whom you think more beautiful than I."

"No, I don't think there is a more beautiful girl in the world than you." "There are other girls you think are just as beautiful, though."

"You are more beautiful than any other girl I ever saw."

"I suppose there are plenty of girls whom you consider almost as beautiful as I am."

"I think you are far more beautiful than any other girl that ever breathed."

"Well, why didn't you say that in the first place?" "That was what I meant, if I didn't exactly say so."

"Oh, well, go on. My goodness! Must I suggest everything nice that you say to me?"

"What more can I say?" "Heavens! I'm not going to sit here giving you lessons. I thought the way you started out that you had made love before."

### No Time to Waste.

He lived each day as if he thought "That day might be his last; Yet little was the good he wrought, And wide the gloom he cast.

He lived each day as if in fear "That no new day might dawn; But there is little weeping here Because he's dead and gone.

He charmed no other's tears away "And made no other glad; But tried, somehow, to get, each day, All that his neighbors had.

### Back to Nature.

"Mrs. Penrose seems to be going in to a decline." "Why do you think so?" "She has become so hollow chested and pale looking lately."

"Oh, that's nothing to be alarmed at. She's merely getting back to nature by cutting out rouge and padding."

### Safe Bet.

"Oh," said the man who was fond of quoting, "that mine enemy would write a book!" "Huh!" replied a bystander. "I'll bet he's done it. You just said he was from Indiana, didn't you?"

### Trouble of His Own.

"Do you believe denudation of the forests is going to ruin the country?" "I don't know. I've been so busy trying to save my hair that I haven't had time to bother about the forests."

### Not a Case of Treat.

"How long has the doctor been treating your wife?" "Treatin' her? Gosh, if you seen his bills you wouldn't think there was much treatin' about it."

### By Contraries.

Things go by contraries in this world. People who have nothing to say are always talking.

S. E. Kiser.